



HELLO PARENTS,

Loose parts are materials that children can move around, carry, combine, sort, line up, collect, put together and take apart in many different ways. There is no right or wrong way to play with these materials. They offer open-ended opportunities for children to be creative, ask questions, solve problems, and test new ideas. The play opportunities with loose parts are endless and add an element of adventure and excitement to children's play. In this newsletter, we encourage children to explore various loose parts.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 – 18 MONTHS)

EXPLORING LIDS

MATERIALS:

- Jar lids in different sizes and colours

DIRECTIONS:

- Let your baby explore the lids using all of their senses.
- Observe how they explore and comment on that.

[Click here](#) for more ideas with loose parts for your baby.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

SORTING

MATERIALS:

- Plastic cups or containers
- Pine cones, fabric, Lego, plastic rings (from a shower curtain)
- Measuring cups
- Ice cube tray or muffin tin

DIRECTIONS:

- Place the materials on the floor or table and invite your child to explore them.
- Possible ideas your child will use: sorting, stacking, filling and dumping, tapping together... The possibilities are unlimited.
- Leave the materials accessible for your child so they can use them in many different ways during the day.

[Click here](#) to find more loose parts ideas.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

MAKE A FACE

MATERIALS:

- A collection of buttons
- Spoons
- Clothes pins
- Fabric pieces
- Rocks and pebbles
- Sticks
- Camera (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- Ask your child to use the materials to create faces.
- Talk about different emotions (happy, sad, and angry), ask your child to show you a happy, sad or angry face and take their picture with a camera.
- Look at the pictures together and ask your child to make the same expressions with the loose parts. You can send us the pictures!

[Click here](#) for more activities about emotions.

[Click here](#) for more ideas on using loose parts.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

DISCOVERY MIRROR

MATERIALS:

- A framed mirror
- Marker caps
- Glass gems
- Hardware nuts and bolts

DIRECTIONS:

- Together with your child collect loose parts from around the house.
- Use the mirror as a background.
- Let your child create on the mirror arranging, designing and working with the materials.
- Your child can sort, match, make patterns, observe reflections, count the materials, and create different shapes.
- Encourage your child to create specific themes, for example: insects, transportation, nature, etc.

[Click here](#) for math activities with loose parts.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

RECYCLED ROBOT

MATERIALS:

- Different size boxes and containers
- Lids, paper towel rolls, straws
- Buttons
- Tape, string or glue
- Pipe cleaners or wire (optional)
- Aluminum foil (optional) or markers

DIRECTIONS:

- Find a large box that will serve for the robot body, and a smaller box for the head.
- Use paper towel tubes for arms and legs.
- Use buttons for eyes and mouth.
- Use tape to connect robot's body parts together.
- Apply eyes, mouth, etc. with glue and let it dry.
- Use pipe cleaners or wire to make antennas and other robot parts.
- Decorate your robot with markers or aluminum foil to give it a science fiction look.

[Click here](#) for more project ideas with loose parts.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

PLEASE, SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK, COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO CHILDCAREMAIN@NCCE1.ORG

A TIP FOR TODAY

- You can use: recycled bottle caps and jar lids, large plastic buttons, shape blocks, felt shapes, small rocks and pebbles, loose pieces from games and puzzles, marbles, sticks, shells, clothes pins, magnets, fabric scraps, etc.
- Always provide your child with containers, pails, baskets, bags, etc. to store and carry the loose parts around.
- Let your child explore the loose parts and see what they turn them into.
- When using loose parts, the focus is on the process of creating, rather than the finished product.
- Remember to choose loose parts that are appropriate for your child's age group.